



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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NEW FISHERY PACT MEANS "MORE FOOD... FOR MORE PEOPLE," F.W.S. DIRECTOR SAYS

The permanent International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries will mean "more food from the sea for more people of the world." Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, stated today.

Mr. Day speaking on the Department of State's "Voice of America" program, discussing the significance of the recent International Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Conference. The program is broadcast by the U. S. Government to radio listeners in foreign countries.

The international commission will be set up to keep the commercially important ground fishes on the Northwest Atlantic banks in stable supply, Mr. Day explained. It will be officially established when four of the 11 nations attending the conference, held in Washington, D. C., January 26 - February 8, ratify the agreement that was adopted.

"The Northwest Atlantic fishing banks — off the coasts of New England, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador, and Greenland — are among the world's chief producers of food from the sea," Mr. Day said in his overseas radio talk. "For centuries, fishermen from North American and western and southern European countries have gone there to cast their nets and reap a rich harvest."

U. S. fishermen now take from 500 to 600 million lbs. of fish each year in the Northwest Atlantic, the Fish and Wildlife Service Director disclosed. Collectively, fishermen of Canada, Newfoundland, France, Portugal, and Spain take even more.

Discussing the fear of biologists that the region's fishery resources are dwindling, he said: "Fish are being taken faster than they can reproduce. The size of the fish being landed is getting smaller. Fishermen have to go further away from port to get a good haul. And more fishermen than ever are now working in the Northwest Atlantic because of the depletion of fishery resources on many European fishing banks."

Conservation measures on an international scale are vital to this region, Mr. Day said. He defined conservation of fishery resources as "public control based on scientific knowledge."

"It is designed to further the fullest, most widespread use that can be obtained from the catch," he asserted. "It is aimed at the highest continuous production that the resources can yield, and at the lowest cost. And it is in line with our attempts to keep up with the world's overwhelming demands for food."

He said the International Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Conference was called by the U. S. Government to develop means for pooling scientific facilities and findings of fishery experts of all the countries whose citizens fish the Northwest Atlantic banks. Delegates from Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Newfoundland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and the United States were present.

"The delegates were most concerned about such valuable ground fishes as haddock, rosefish, halibut, and cod, which live in the sea's shallow regions and feed off the bottom of the ocean," Mr. Day said. "They are caught principally by motor-powered vessels which drag huge, bag-like nets across the ocean's floor.

"We do not know enough about the life habits of these ground fishes. One of the most important and difficult problems is to determine what the minimum spawning stock should be, and to devise practical measures that will insure but not unnecessarily restrict the fishery."

Under the terms of the new international agreement, each coastal country, from Norway to Italy, and from the United States to Greenland, will appoint up to three commissioners, and will pool information and research facilities to find the why and how of fish abundance. The commission would have the power to recommend catch size and fishing gear limitations, and to recommend closed seasons for certain species or areas when needed.

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